

H. Res. 204

In the House of Representatives, U.S.,

April 29, 2003.

Whereas charter schools across the United States deliver high-quality education and challenge students to reach their potential;

Whereas charter schools are public schools authorized by a designated public entity to respond to the needs of communities, families, and students and to promote the principles of quality, choice, and innovation;

Whereas, in exchange for the flexibility and autonomy given to charter schools, they are held accountable by their sponsors for improving student achievement and for their financial and other administrative operations;

Whereas 39 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico have passed laws authorizing charter schools;

Whereas almost 2,700 charter schools are now operating in 36 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and serving nearly 700,000 students;

Whereas the Congress has appropriated nearly \$1,000,000,000 for the costs of planning, startup, implementation, and information dissemination associated with charter schools since the initial authorization in 1994 of

the Federal charter school grant program under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965;

Whereas an additional \$50,000,000 in Federal appropriations has now been approved to help address the facilities' financing needs of charter schools;

Whereas charter schools can be vehicles for improving student achievement for students who attend them, for stimulating change and improvement in all public schools, and for benefiting all public school students;

Whereas charter schools must meet the student achievement accountability requirements included by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 in the same manner as other public schools, and often set higher and additional individual goals, to ensure that they are of high quality and truly accountable to the public;

Whereas charter schools give parents new freedom to choose their public school, charter schools routinely measure parental satisfaction levels, and charter schools must prove their ongoing and increasing success to parents, policymakers, and their communities;

Whereas nearly 70 percent of charter schools report having a waiting list, and the total number of students on all such waiting lists is enough to fill another 1,000 average-sized charter schools;

Whereas students in charter schools nationwide have demographic characteristics similar to students in all public schools;

Whereas charter schools in many States serve significant numbers of students from families with lower incomes, minority students, and students with disabilities, and, in

a majority of charter schools, almost one-half of the students are considered at-risk or are former dropouts;

Whereas the fourth annual National Charter Schools Week is being celebrated from April 28, 2003, to May 2, 2003, and is an event sponsored by charter schools and grassroots charter school organizations across the United States to recognize the significant impacts, achievements, and innovations of the Nation's charter schools; and

Whereas charter schools have enjoyed broad bipartisan support from the Administration, the Congress, State Governors, State legislatures, educators, and parents across the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) the House of Representatives acknowledges and commends the charter school movement, charter schools across the United States, and the students, parents, teachers, and administrators of such schools, for their ongoing contributions to education and to improving and strengthening the public school system of the United States;

(2) the House of Representatives supports the fourth annual National Charter Schools Week; and

(3) it is the sense of the House of Representatives that the President should issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to conduct appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities to demonstrate sup-

port for charter schools during this week-long celebration in communities throughout the United States.

Attest:

Clerk.